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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 9, 1933

(FOR BROADCASTING USE ONLY)

Subject: "Remedies for Old Clothes." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Suppose you're the doctor this morning. And suppose your patients are discarded clothes, models from other years that you would like to fix up for your spring wardrobe. Let's look some of these clothes over and consider what ails them. Then let's discuss remedies.

Case number one is a very common ailment. Here is a dress too short for this year's styles. For this condition several treatments are possible. The doctor will have to decide which one suits the individual garment. Of course, letting down the hem is the easiest way to lengthen any skirt. But many garments nowadays are made without wide hems. Most of them have just a narrow hemmed roll to finish the bottom. So that quick and easy treatment for a short garment isn't possible.

Fortunately for the home dressmaker, this year's styles allow a combination of fabrics and set-in pieces. You can lengthen a dress by setting in material either at the shoulders or the waist. And the material you use for piecing may either match the dress or be in contrast to it. That's where your piece-box comes in handy. If you want to lengthen a dress at the waist, you may make a yoke for the upper part of the skirt or set in a girdle-piece around the waist. If you have some extra self-material, cut a smooth yoke to fit around the hips and fasten the too-short skirt to this. For a slender and youthful figure, lengthen the dress by setting in a girdle effect around the waist, using perhaps two inches of contrasting material above and below the waistline. But this girdle piece won't be becoming if you are slightly heavy, because it will center attention at your waistline.

Still another way to lengthen a dress is from the shoulders. Cut the upper part of the bodice off or rip the shoulder seams and allow the dress to slide down on the figure until it is the right length. Then make a new upper part to the bodice of self or contrasting material. If you drop the dress at the shoulders this way, of course, you'll also need to take it in at the waist and refit it. And you'll need to be sure the dress is wide enough to fit the hips when it is lowered. Sometimes dresses dropped down from a shoulder yoke prove too narrow at the hips. You can give more room if you set in a V or diamond-shaped piece on the underarm seam and carry it down to about eight inches below the waistline. You can make such a piece from discarded sleeves.

Probably the easiest style of dress to lengthen from the shoulders is the straight, one-piece dress that has plenty of width.

Sometimes the best way to lengthen is to put all the material into a skirt. You can make the yoke of the skirt, or the gores or pleats, out of the material left from the waist and sleeves. Wear either a blouse and a contrasting jacket or a sweater with such a skirt. Still another idea is to make the dress into a suspender dress--just a skirt with suspenders over the shoulders which you'll wear with a blouse. You'll find a suspender dress an economy style. For office

or street, wear a plain tailored blouse with it. For afternoon wear, substitute a blouse that is somewhat dressier. There you have two outfits from one dress.

Maybe you have one of those ensemble dresses, popular for several years past, hanging in your closet waiting for remodeling. I mean the type of dress with a straight-line jacket of the same material. You can convert such an ensemble into one of the new boxed bolero outfits. If the dress is too short, make it into a skirt, to wear with a plain little white blouse. Then shorten the jacket until it comes slightly above the waist to give the bolero effect.

Now, suppose you have a skirt that is too short and have no matching material to make a yoke for it. Then make the yoke of some inexpensive material and wear the skirt with an over-blouse, a sweater or a tunic which will come down long enough to cover the upper part of the skirt.

Two-piece dresses you can often lengthen very easily by sewing the skirt directly to the bottom of the blouse.

When you're cutting and piecing and setting in, you always need to give some thought to the line of division in bodices, skirts and sleeves. This line should never come at the fullest part of the dress. For example, a line in the bodice should fall either just at the armhole or low, near the waistline, never across the fullest part of the bust. The same is true of hips and sleeves.

So much for the first ailing patient--the garment that is too short. Now for another ailment common to discarded clothes--worn armholes or those spoiled by perspiration stains under the arm. One good remedy is a new bodice top. You can replace the shoulders and upper sleeves of the dress with matching or contrasting material. Or you can cut out the sleeve and replace it by a new one of the modified dolman or raglan or square-cut type. For these larger sleeves, you'll recut the armhole, thus removing the worn or stained parts. By the way, you don't have to buy a whole dress pattern to find out how to make these new sleeves. Practically all commercial pattern companies are selling separate sleeve patterns these days. You can choose one that best suits the needed repair and general style of the dress.

Still another possibility is to remove the sleeve, bind around the armhole and wear a jacket with the dress. The suspender dress and the jumper or guimpe dress are still other ways of remedying worn armholes and neck parts. Both suspender dresses and guimpe dresses are especially becoming to slender figures. To make a guimpe dress, all you have to do is to cut out the armholes and neckline and bind or face the edges. You can make a blouse or guimpe for this dress from any good sheer cotton or silk pieces in other left-over garments.

A week from today, we'll continue this subject of making over old clothes. In the meantime you may be interested in knowing that specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have just prepared a leaflet on clothes economy, full of helpful pointers for the home dressmaker. Write for the leaflet on clothes economy either to this station or direct to the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C.

Tomorrow we'll plan an inexpensive Sunday dinner.

